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AWD:al
20 July 1959

NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE TALK

July 24, 1959

I appreciate this opportunity to make the concluding remarks to the National Strategy Seminar for Reserve Officers. From your agenda which I have reviewed and from the reports I have had of your meetings, I appreciate that you have broadly covered the various elements of Soviet strategy and tactics, the nature of the Communist threat, the relative military strength of East and West, and the face of war in the nuclear age.

In dealing with the Sino-Soviet threat I find -- and here I am not referring to the sophisticated briefings that you have received -- that too often there is a tendency to go to extremes in viewing the Sino-Soviet position. There are experts in this field who tend to magnify almost all aspects of Soviet power. There are those who tend to discount unduly.

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The final class of experts is the larger though recently we have seen an extraordinary instance of the other extreme in magazine articles that have attempted to discredit, on what appears to me to be the flimsiest evidence, recognized Soviet accomplishments, particularly in the field of outer space.

One basic fact should be kept in mind, namely, the relative scale of productivity of the two great power blocs. The gross national production of the United States alone is over twice that of the USSR, and if we add to U.S. production that of other countries of the Free World, while adding to Soviet production Communist China and its Satellites, the ratio is still more favorable to the Free World.

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As against this we must recognize that the rate of growth of the Communist Bloc is substantially greater than that of the Free World, and over the immediate future will probably remain so. However, even projecting these relative growth rates into the future, the date when the Bloc's productivity would approach that of the Free World is far distant.

In answer to this, one may argue that if this productive capacity is subject to nuclear destruction, our industrial superiority would not be of much avail to us.

That either of the great nuclear powers could destroy the other, without the attacker himself being devastated, is not, I believe, a theory that is subscribed to on either side of the Iron Curtain, while the threat of mutual nuclear destruction is a nightmare that cannot be wholly dismissed.

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It is more generally accepted that a more immediate danger for the years ahead of us is the slow attrition of the West's power position by a combination of political warfare and subversion, economic penetration, and possibly aggressions by proxy directed primarily against the newly emerging and less developed areas of the world in Asia, Africa and even in this Hemisphere.

To that view of the danger now facing us, I generally subscribe, although not with the degree of pessimism that many adopt. And so long as these are the present dimensions of the peril, the superior industrial and productive capacity of the free world remains both as a great asset in the type of struggle we face and, if properly used, an insurance policy against slipping into military inferiority.

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Although, of course, it is not the role of intelligence to attempt to reach net estimates of our relative military position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, before leaving the subject of the direct military threat, I would add a word about its nature and extent.

From the statements of Khrushchev and other of the Soviet leaders, as well as from other evidence available to us, we conclude that the Soviet Union is placing more and more reliance on the development of ballistic missiles plus nuclear power as its weapon of attack for defense against the manned bomber, both fighter aircraft and ground-to-air and air-to-air missiles. It is also true that Khrushchev and his cohorts have done their best to deprecate the manned bomber. This may be, in part, measures to quiet the fears of their own peoples and in fact to bolster their assertions of military superiority in a particular military field. Khrushchev has described manned bombers as museum pieces. He had this to say last May to a delegation from the West German Social Democratic party:

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From his viewpoint this is undoubtedly good propaganda if he can make it stick since the USSR today is presumably in a position of inferiority vis-a-vis the U.S. with regard to manned bombers and apart from any technical lead here, we have a certain geographical advantage in view of the wide dispersal and greater proximity of our bases to the Soviet Union.

It obviously should remain a requirement of policy that both our military defenses and our ability to retaliate by missile and aircraft should together be kept adequate to meet the threat. Here is where the industrial capacity of the Free World and of the U.S. in particular must play its role. In the past when a technical, scientific, and industrial problem, such as that we face today in the missile field, has been put up to the ingenuity of our scientists and production experts, we have not long remained in second place. It is certainly incumbent upon us to see that we do not fail in this instance.

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We believe that Khrushchev's ambitions are more subtle and in line with the basic strategy of international communism which has not basically changed over the years, but which increasingly has deprecated war as their chosen instrument of policy.

On many occasions, Khrushchev has restated his objectives but never more bluntly than in his speeches in Poland these last days. Apparently referring to the phrase attributed to him, "We will bury you," he is reported to have explained in his recent ebullient remarks that when he said that communism would be the graveyard of capitalism he did not mean that communists would take shovels and start digging; history would take care of capitalists and he indicated that they too, together with the bombers, would become museum pieces. He is reported to have added that "If there were a God and he could act he would take a good broom and sweep you out."

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Certainly Khrushchev pictures himself as devoted to the task of helping in this buying and sweeping. However, with all of this Khrushchev has told his people again and again that he would not get them involved in war.

This generally has been the fanatical tenets and credo of communism, more sophisticatedly preached by Lenin, bravely practiced by Stalin, and still the profound faith of present Kremlin leaders and probably will be that of his most immediate successors. Unfortunately, Soviet policy is not restricted to building a better Russia for the Russians, to this we could not object. For the Kremlin leaders, the USSR is merely the base from which Communism is to be expanded to over the world. As we are entering a period of greatly expanded personal intercourse between the two power blocs, with exhibitions, tourism, cultural exchanges and the like, it is important not to lose sight of the fundamental nature of this conflict.

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It is, I believe, largely ignored by the casual visitor to the Soviet Union since, to a great degree the Kremlin's objectives are not well understood or necessarily shared by the Soviet people and exchange missions with whom our tourists/come in contact. Furthermore, Soviet policy in this regard is not fully understood by our own people in this country, much less so by the citizens of the Soviet Union with whom as individuals the American people have so much in common.

We should remember that the Soviet Union is a dictatorship run by the high command of the Communist Party and the Party itself numbers only about eight million about 5% of the adult population of the Soviet Union and only _____% of the number of voters in our own last Presidential election.

/Furthermore, these eight million party members, through their Party Congress and their Central Committee, are well disciplined and have no real freedom in the choosing of their leaders or in the determining of the policies on which their fate may depend.

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While we view the subsidized export of communism as an improper interference in the internal affairs of other countries of the world, this phase of the communist program would be conducted in the international field by open and peaceful means as a form of open competition between the two great conflicting views of how society and the lives of people should be organized, we could well accept this challenge and say let us compete let the peoples choose and decide which system is the better. Khrushchev claims he is inviting us to such a competition.

But this is a mirage. In the first place, nowhere behind the Iron Curtain have the peoples themselves had a free opportunity to choose? Certainly not in Czechoslovakia in 1948 or in Hungary in 1956 or in East Germany today. And where in the Free World would Khrushchev give this choice. If our liberties could be taken from us in some other way, or even in the Soviet Union or in Communist China.

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Communism is advanced by fat more [illegible] and peoples are faced with the fait accompli of being taken over before they realize what has happened to them.

It apparently was the original concept of Stalin in the early post-war days that capitalism was on the verge of collapse as a result of two fratricidal wars among the Western powers. He felt that the Free World could be easily absorbed -- certainly it would need a push but this the Kremlin was ready and eager to give.

The European satellite area was taken over largely by the sheer weight of military occupation and suppression. In Hungary this was helped on by what Rakosi described as the "salami" technique -- biting off bit by bit of elements of freedom until the whole structure was eroded.

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In Czechoslovakia the popular front technique succeeded in putting the minority communist party into power. This illustrated the grave danger of a situation in any state where the communist party and its allies succeed in holding even a substantial minority position. Once in power, the voting ends and popular way has no peaceful way of recovering control.

These same tactics were tried in Italy and France where they failed in the period following the Czechoslovak coup in 1948 due both to the increasing understanding of communist techniques and the growing impact of the Marshall Plan aid.

On the mainland of China, the fabric of the country was worn down by ten years of internal struggle and international war and succumbing to the impact of communist military and subversive power aided and abetted by Kremlin military and other support.

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In Europe [illegible] more overt subversive [illegible] by the Kremlin [illegible] Civil War and the Berlin Blockade. [illegible] the Communist occupation was terminated and the Iron Curtain began [illegible] Austria.

In Asia, Korea represented a further effort of the communist international movement to expand its world by using more aggressive tactics than they had dared to employ in Europe. All this was done before the Kremlin had developed a nuclear capability and we had one.

From reading between the lines of Khrushchev's secret speech of 1956 denouncing Stalin, it appears he felt his predecessor had taken undue risks.

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However, he would proceed more cautiously but to the same objective, since the fall of mainland China, with the single exception of the loss of North Viet Nam -- blanced by the recovery of Eastern Austria -- the communist tide has not advanced. There is every reason to believe that there has been a reconsideration of techniques and a redefinition of policy but no change in the over-all objective.

Certainly the Kremlin must estimate today that its over-all military position vis-a-vis the West, in view of its new nuclear and growing missile capabilities, is more advantageous than it was in the immediate post-war days when it relied primarily on a superiority in manpower and conventional forces.

There is, therefore, no reason to believe that they will be less determined in pressing their programs but in all probability will do so without the direct acts of provocation which Stalin risked and which today will place them with the alternative of war or open acknowledged retreat. Certainly their acts in Berlin, Iraq, and elsewhere bear this out.

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While they will endeavor to keep us as occupied as possible over such issues as Berlin and German reunification, they may well concentrate a major effort in the outer areas of the world, in the newly emerging states of Asia and of Africa. In this effort they will employ economic penetration, the development of hard core communist parties -- underground or above ground -- propaganda both open and black, backed in those areas around the periphery of the Communist bloc itself with threat of their military power.

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